

IMMEDIATE EMPIRICISM AND PRIMITIVE  
PROCESS PHILOSOPHY

BRUCE W. BROTHERSTON

WHEN psychology wished to discover the original psychic equipment of humanity, it seemed the obvious method to go to the earliest possible stage in the life of the individual and there, where environmental influence is slightest, to question the untaught mind by means of controlled stimuli. But such experimenting with babes, valuable as it is for special knowledge, has inescapable drawbacks as a method for discovering the *given* in mind. In the first place it is recognized that environmental influence reaches back into prenatal days. The constancy of the intra-uterine environment seems to be a necessary condition for even the structural constancy of the organism. But besides this the child can no more be said to have the completed original equipment of normal human mind—if, as the writer believes, there is such an entity—at birth than at conception. Only upon passing through adolescence and reaching normal adult life, is the individual mind finally endowed with its *given*—with the original human psychic equipment. Then only has experience come upon the power to be fully self-observant; and then endowment and confused nurture are hopelessly scrambled.

But there is perhaps another method. A feeling may be justified that the ardent interest which recent philosophy has taken in the mental attitudes of early man arises in a sense that we are here present at the awakening of conation into its reflective phase, and can observe the primal behavior of mind as finally rounded out. At this point in the process of evolution, where conation first arrived at the stage of reflection, where intellectual operation was at its merest beginning, where the content of learning was too little complex to confuse the forms of immediate feeling, modern research has discovered an almost uniform mental attitude obtaining across ages of time and in geographically segregated continents. A suggestion moving behind philosophical interest may be this: “Here, at the earliest attainable point in the experience of the race rather than of the individual, we may find the unobstructed mind in touch with reality in immediate feeling, or non-sensuous perception, of

*the given*. It was this which Rousseau felt in his slogan "Back to Nature," but which in his day could not be fully understood.

Immediate or radical empiricism has been criticised on the ground that, purporting to present *the given*—the most naïve and ingenuous beginning of experience—it has arrived at a view at the extreme remove from common sense, more difficult for common sense to grasp than the most intellectualized construction. But it may be that this is so merely because common sense in the modern world is no longer naïve, however untrustworthy it may be, but is loaded with sophistications infiltrated from the learned classes. The truly naïve view-point is the view-point not of modern but of primitive common sense—if it should turn out that we have the means of observing that view-point. The argument that a truly radical or immediate empiricism would manifest the ingeniousness of common sense may perhaps be entirely in its favor. If it is possible to discover the primitive mental attitude, we shall find it simply following conation as it showed itself in its *given* constituents when it first arrived at the stage of reflection.

The non-sensuous perception of these *given* constituents is immediate or radical empiricism. In another article<sup>1</sup> the present writer has treated the concept of the *given* to immediate empiricism. He has there pointed out that James made next-to-next-ness, or connexity, definitive of radical empiricism. But that article maintained that there are two things and not merely one constitutive of the immediately given. It pointed out that besides the connexity, James found *feelings* of *tendency* upon the same empirical basis; which, it argued, plainly include the religious *total-conservation-of-value-feeling* and the scientific *necessity-of-unity-feeling*. James made such feelings of tendency the basis of his limited pragmatism, and he did not find place for them any more than for pragmatism in his more profound empiricism. But the relation could not and did not fail to suggest itself and was bound ultimately to work through against the obstacles it had to encounter. It was thus held, in that article, that there are two levels or poles in *the given* to reflective conation or spiritual urgency; one, that of process, and the other, that of unity in any and all stages of inclusion.

We shall attempt to show in this article that it is possible to arrive at the primitive human mental attitude and that in the primi-

<sup>1</sup>The *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXX, No. 6, March 16, 1933.

tive mental attitude both these poles of reflective conation or spiritual urgency are at once obvious. This will appear, we believe, as we trace the beginnings of historic philosophy in their relations to prehistoric mental attitudes. It is significant that James himself saw that his radical empiricism is precisely Buddhism. The principle boasted as Gautama's original contribution was called "dependent origination." It is precisely the principle of connexity moving and arriving from below sense-experience. To use James' language regarding his own method, "It explores the way in which the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience."<sup>2</sup> In Buddhism and Sankhya we have immediate empiricism reporting the movement of conation below the level of sense perception. The balance of psychic tendencies (the three *gunas*) is disturbed, and an eddy of desire (a *vriti*), a *feeling of tendency*, is set up which gives rise to sensed objects (*buddhi*, "*name and form*").

There is no doubt that James felt his kinship with Buddhism because of this immediate empiricism by non-sensuous perception getting at the basis of reality, perceiving causality or origination at work. But Buddhism was like James in another regard also: it discarded the unities of soul and of thing, and this was another strong likeness. Gautama took his position for the practical end of escaping attachment to desires and of attaining salvation from suffering; James, to oust a spurious theory of knowledge which had been made the basis of a pernicious metaphysical determinism. The difference is significant for it gave James a prejudice against expansive unities but left Gautama free. The latter denied the soul, was non-committal about Brahma at least as to what constituted it, but he posited the unity of returning cycles.

I have been told that it is generally recognized by scholars that Buddhism was a reaction to a more primitive mental attitude; and this intuition can now, I think, be set out in some detail. In the first place the notion of dependent origination was not, as Buddhism claims, an original contribution of Gautama, but it was a position of primitive mind, discoverable in ancient and modern pre-civilized races, prevalent in the vedas and the upanishads and, mingled with some fancy, taking different forms in Gautama's day. Again the unity of the world cycle, an essential doctrine of Buddhism, is the

<sup>2</sup>*The Meaning of Truth*, Preface, p. 13.

most primitive form of unity that held the human mind as we shall later attempt to show. So that we may find here convincing evidence that both connexity (dependent origination) and widest unity are thoroughly primitive notions. They arose with the rise of the power of reflection but before there was any sufficient practise of reflection upon sense forms to make it possible to explain unity as conscious synthesis. They were grasped by Bergsonian intuition, non-sensuous perception, and they lead us to the two inescapable motifs of philosophy,—the principles of multiplicity and of unity at their common source in “the deep ground of the given.”

We shall point out first the quite obvious pre-Buddhistic source of the notion of dependent origination. The formula repeats itself in two forms in the Buddhistic sacred books and Warren says that “One is inclined to surmise that the full formula in its present shape is a piece of patchwork put together of two or more that were current in the Buddha’s time.”<sup>3</sup> One need not labor the matter when he is merely affirming that not alone in Buddhism but also in pre-Buddhistic literature, the upanishads and the vedas, there is a constant reference to the merging and flux of process as more significant of reality than the hard outlines of perceived and conceived forms.<sup>4</sup> The question of Gargi to Yagnavalkya carries one at once deeply into the atmosphere of the upanishads. It is the question of an inner unbroken process. She said: “O Yagnavalkya, that of which they say that it is above the heavens, beneath the earth, embracing heaven and earth, past, present and future, tell me in what it is woven like warp and woof.” He replies that it is woven like warp and woof in the ether (space) and that the ether is woven like warp and woof in the “Imperishable” which he calls “that

<sup>3</sup>*Buddhism in Translations* by H. C. Warren, Harvard Oriental Series, p. 115.

<sup>4</sup>But while the conception of dependent origination is precisely that of process in modern immediate empiricism, no one would affirm that Buddhistic formulae or upanishadic description present any consistent analysis of the flow of process. That, as consistently pursued for its own sake, is an enterprise of recent philosophy alone. In Indian accounts of process, fancy is mixed with intuition in many varied ways. The purpose of Indian thought is attained in a clear general conception of process which sets it over against perceived and conceived separate objects and individuals (name and form) as the source and being of these. Ancient India then turns to practical methods, as in Yoga, to realize this basic fact by expunging the obsession of reality that attaches to “name and form.” This purpose operating in their analysis vitiates it as a scientific account. For a technical Buddhistic analysis of process in the production of an individual, see Warren, *op. cit.* Appendix.



Brahman." He is speaking of the inner unified process from which issue all forms. "By the command of that Imperishable, O Gargi, sun and moon stand apart . . . heaven and earth stand apart . . . what we call days and nights, half-months, months, seasons, years, stand apart. By the command of that Imperishable, O Gargi, men praise those who give, the Gods follow the sacrifices, the Fathers, the Darvi-offering."<sup>5</sup>

Understanding this "Imperishable Brahman" as inner process, Buddhism never departed from the upanishadic position. Buddhism, except in one only of its forms, never denied Brahman. It denied that atman or purusha, the individual soul, is Brahman and it was non-committal as to what Brahman is; but as to unified process as the basis of all, it affirmed it: the *path* (of process) is real.<sup>6</sup> But the conception of unity retained in Buddhism is our next topic. The present point is that process, which is the regulative notion in Buddhistic philosophy, is not less prominent in the upanishads. A list of the passages in the upanishadic literature in which fancy plays with the derivation of "name and form" from the deeper flux of process would not be short.<sup>7</sup> Moreover the merging of all separate elements of sense and intellect in a real self (which was repudiated by Gautama) presents innumerable passages in which a similar merging is conceived;<sup>8</sup> being unified as self is another matter. Indeed it is unified now as Self and now as Brahma, as subjective and objective moods may alternate; and Buddhism, as we have said, did not repudiate Brahman.

We go back another step in tracing the notion of process into the early world. The divine fire (Agni) is conceived as real inner process behind the outward forms, and in its operation reducing the outward appearances to inner reality. Fire is the substantial principle of becoming in the vedas as in Heraclitus. Men place Agni on the altar as the augmentor of strength.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, the sacrificial fire turns the thing sacrificed into its inner reality which "feeds the Gods"; or, more expressively, "increases the Rita," or the order of nature. "The Marruts, who give rain, the

<sup>5</sup>Brih. Up. III, 8, 7-12. Cf. III, 6.

<sup>6</sup>Visuddhi-Magga (chap. XVI) quoted in Warren, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>7</sup>See, for instance Kand. Up. VI, 3, 2ff; Brih. Up. I, 4, 6 and 7; I, 6, 3; Mund. Up. I, 1, 9; Tait. Up. II, 7.

<sup>8</sup>Kath. Up. II, 4, 14, 15; Tait. Up. II, 8, 5; I, 1; Brih. Up. IV, 4, 5ff; Mund. Up. I, 1, 9, etc., etc.

<sup>9</sup>R. V. 1, 36, 2.

fire-tongued (lightning) increasers of Rita."<sup>10</sup> Fire is the process of burning up the merely seeming and of increasing reality and its order or rita. Thus also in the Greek Heraclitus, "All things are exchanged for fire."

But the fire process is conceived as being one with the digestive process. Agni abides in the waters, "mingled with the essence of water," and conducts process there.<sup>11</sup> Agni is "deposited in all creatures" as the digestive process.<sup>12</sup> But in this conception the vedas bring us at once into the mental attitude of primitive man. The core of the primitive conception of mana is conation, a wish, an inner doing, of which the digestive process and the process of combustion are main instances. Hence outward change presents no difficulties as outward objects (perceptions) arise from an inner real process. A man can just as well shapeshift into a werewolf; a clansman can perfectly well be a crow or an eagle-hawk. The same mana or inner doing is there. This is the crude form in which it was first seen that percepts are *signs* for conation and concepts are functional to the ends of urgency. The yam is eaten. Its name or form passes away in digestion but its mana is appropriated. So the bodies of any totems digest in the stomachs of the tribesmen; but the totem-mana is, by this very shape-shifting of outer forms, released to replenish the mana of the clan and so of all the clans of the tribe.

Hence the Buddhist principle of becoming, of *process* observed below the level of sense-perception by immediate empiricism; and its derivation of "name and form," of perceived and conceived objects, from this real process, is not an original conception or method, but is inherited from primitive man. Hence when the genius of Schopenhauer, of James, and of Bergson regarded conation as the key by which the cosmos is to be comprehended, they may be seen to have pierced through the sophistication of the ages and achieved the view, in one of its aspects, which completely naive experience (immediate empiricism) first took of itself.

<sup>10</sup>R. V. 1, 44, 14.

<sup>11</sup>R. V. 1, 24, 20ff.

<sup>12</sup>R. V. 1, 7, 8; 1, 95, 2; 1, 31, 7. Cf. H. H. Wilson, *Rig Veda Sanhita* R. V. 1, 59, note b and passim. He speaks of Agni as "fire or natural heat of the stomach which is the principle element in digestion," Cf. also R. V. 1, 44, 2; 1, 56; 1, 36, 2; 1, 45, 6, where Agni as "bearer of oblations" renders the sacrifice into food for the Gods as the digestive process does for man.

But the emphasis upon process in the doctrine of dependent origination is best seen to signify the reaction of Buddhism to a more primitive view when the notion of unity which accompanies this emphasized process is remembered. No doubt James saw his radical empiricism as identical with Buddhism not only because of their similar grasp of observed process, but also because they both repudiated any real unity in the individual self. But James did not realize how deeply the principle of unity is involved in Buddhism in spite of its doctrine of impermanence of self and thing. It was unfortunate that he himself carried over from his famous onslaught on the Absolute of the transcendentalists an animus against all inclusive unity.<sup>13</sup>

He recognizes of course that process involves unity, but the unity he finds constituent of consciousness and given in experience is one that issues in sense experience. Beyond such narrower, pragmatic issue, in the sphere where ideas are not verifiable in this limited way of terminating in sense, they are accountable to the will alone. Here comes in the famous doctrine of the "will to believe" and of the "forced option." But by the force of the controversy in which James was contending there was excluded any consideration of a unity large enough for these latter realms of human experience and also *given* in experience itself which would then itself "force the option," and thus reveal the intrinsic presence of intelligence in will and feeling, not only as an external instrument, but as the inward principle also of fulfilment or unity.

It is illuminating to observe what Gautama does in so similar a philosophic situation, but with so different an animus. He excludes a unity that has grown strong in the epic struggle of the Aryan invasion of India, namely, the unity of the individual. The upanishadic movement had also come to the realization of this subjective unity. But it may be said to be recognized to-day that an objective unity is more primitive. Men were socially conscious before they were individually conscious.<sup>14</sup> And it is well known that in the social consciousness, the total cosmos was included by early man whether or not that inclusion is original or is, as Durkheimians

<sup>13</sup>See the present writer's article on "Immediate Empiricism and Unity," *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. XXX, No. 6, Mar. 16, 1933. Also "Neutralism and Radical Empiricism," by C. V. Tower, *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 589.

<sup>14</sup>Cf., e. g., W. Jerusalem, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, tr., C. F. Sanders, p. 326.

maintain, a projection of the social consciousness. The upanishadic movement, in its vedanta tendency glories in a universal fusion, now as Atman and, in the next breath, as Brahman, subjective and objective unity alternating. In its sankhya tendency it sees the prakrita, or stream of objective event, as existing for the sake of the soul (purusha) and points to an original unity deeper than its dualistic tendency.<sup>15</sup> The purusha must see not the eddies in the prakrita, or pradhana, but only the clear-surfaced stream, in which it shall find itself reflected as complete unity. Thus individualism as it arose in India's spiritual movement, was being made subordinate to the ascetic ideal which Hindu life was taking on.

But Gautama in the long discipline of his powerful nature, came to feel that the opposition between individualism and asceticism was ineradicable. Begin with an admittedly real individualism and no regimen can overcome it. He therefore taught that the ascription of unity or permanence to the individual soul is the prime error of desire or worldliness itself. The atman or purusha, when considered as permanent unity as it was universally in his day, fastens so stoutly upon the *separate* individual and his special desires as to block effectively the way of salvation.

In excluding this, however, the more primitive objective unity was still maintained. Gautama did not repudiate Brahman; although, as to what constitutes it, he is non-committal as he must be when both soul and thing are unreal. But a closer observation reveals that there is an inevitable unity in Buddhism and a unity conceived, as we shall find, in precisely the same way in the most primitive world-view traceable. Just as in the Greek Heraclitus, a similar flux or stream of dependent origination appeared in a unified cycle which was interpreted as logos or reason; so with Gautama, when soul and thing are both impermanent, what is real is *the path*<sup>16</sup> and the path is what we might call the bed of the world-cycle. Of course Nirvana<sup>16</sup> is real, but Nirvana is simply the high-point in the path, at which the deepest and most persistent aspect of the world, namely, *karma*, ceases. Absolute unity obtains. Yet not quite absolute, for a new multiplicity arises in a new flux through the cyclic path. The inevitable nature of the path, through which a cycle completes itself, is seen in the special means used in bringing all

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Belvalkar and Ranade, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 303 note, 307f, 424, 425.

<sup>16</sup>Visuddhi-Magga (chap. XVI), Warren, op. cit., p. 146.



creatures to the four trances, in which retarded karma catches up, when the end of a cycle is approaching.<sup>17</sup> The whole path must be covered.

The apparently inescapable unity, like that in early Greek philosophy, stands aside wholly from any problem of knowledge, which may be said to have disturbed the normal development of James' mind. But the unity retained in Gautama is an immediate inheritance from the primitive world. The concept of Brahma in its primitive form is the ancient Indian form of mana and from the beginning it appears as unity.<sup>18</sup> It is true that we find different individual things, a mana of this and a mana of that; and it is easy for modern individualistic prejudice to jump to the conclusion that we have here the conception at its source. But the fact which gives mana its real significance is its superindividual and superparticular nature, no matter how it may assume differing color, as it centers in different particulars. The superindividual notion of responsibility among all early men goes to the bottom of the matter. Mana is always a superparticular focussing on a particular point. The tension of the superindividual, binding all individuals and particulars into a unity, is the escapeless notion. Not "substance," nor "danger-centering," nor "strangeness," is the definitive aspect of mana, but rather its holding all particulars and individuals in proper place in the unity of their tribal world.

We will here set down very briefly some illustrations of the original force of the *feeling of unity* in the primitive mind. First, the primitive attitude to death. It is simply nonsense that primitive man conceived the continuation of life beyond death because he childishly failed to mark the final nature of death's changes.<sup>19</sup> Modern science often blows both hot and cold in dealing with primitive man. At one time his situation in the face of threatening death is dramatically presented and the effect upon his imagination is made to account for much. At another time it is held that he fails to notice the changes which death entails and so his notion of continued life presents no problem. A better explanation is that a tension to unity is so immediately felt by early man that his tribe re-

<sup>17</sup>Visuddhi-Magga (chap. XIII), Warren, op. cit., p. 322.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. J. E. Harrison, *Themis*, p. 72; MM. Hubert et Mauss, *Année Sociol.* VII. P. 116.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Cornford, op. cit., p. 161, note 3, quoting Levy-Bruhl, *Fonct. ment.*, p. 358.

mains a social life unbroken even by death that stalks him at every turn.

The meaning of *karma* appears in this connection. When Buddhism repudiated the permanence of the individual which primitive man had not yet conceived, it was this persistent "inner doing," or *mana*, that remained in *karma*, binding existence to existence across the divide of death, and persisting through *the path* to the borders of *nirvana*. Up to this point, the "inner doing" has been centered in particular ends. In *nirvana* it ceases, only because it is unified or referred to the whole. So Gautama feels that *Brahma*, the objective unity, is not to be denied. We find operative here the same feeling of unity that makes death to primitive man only a wavering in a unified course of life. Indeed *karma* is a conception that reveals unity as intrinsic to Buddhism as also to the primitive world-view which Buddhism inherited. For *karma* is fully understood only as the negative aspect of cosmic unity. When this unity is denied in the seeming permanence or independence of the particular, it draws painfully. *Karma* is the inner pull of cosmic unity.

The force of the immediate feeling of unity in the primitive mind is seen again in totemic classification. All objects that have taken form and name in the life of totemic societies are classed under the different totems.<sup>20</sup> If anything is classed under a particular totem, its *mana* is only a focussing of the "totemic principle" or *mana* of the totem which in turn is a more inclusive centering of the total tribal cosmic *mana*. There is no individual conation but it reaches out to a *tertium quid* which is the tensional unity of the little tribal cosmos, itself.

Besides the superindividual responsibility, the deathless tribal solidarity, and totemic classification, there is the fact that taboos are not a matter of accumulation of interdictions, but their totality constitutes a system with an inner unity, namely the negative ritual, which again stands in organic relation with the positive ritual for the total conservation of value, a matter which the present writer has treated in another place.<sup>21</sup> If space permitted, much could be said of the force of unity in the primitive world-view.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Durkheim et Mauss, "Classifications primitives," *Année Sociol.* VI; Durkheim, op. cit. pp. 141ff.

<sup>21</sup>*The Monist*, July, 1933.

When we seek to trace the form which unity first took in early mind, we find the origin of the Buddhist cycle and of the Heraclitian logos. Mana, which as we have argued is process held in tension to unity—a cosmic unity of all pervading process—tends to concentrate, permanently or occasionally, in sun, or storm, or mountain-top, or social conflict. These potent centerings are sometimes advantageous to the tribe and sometimes disadvantageous. The same concentration may pass from good to evil, as the sun from light and warmth to sun-stroke or a *corrobori* from a joy-feast to a row. Good and evil are a first obvious division. It appears that this division very early became fixed. The advantageous and disadvantageous focussings split the manistic cosmos into two consistent parts. As far back as the time when the charms of the Atharvan Veda were taking form, we find one kind of mana operated in healing purposes and another in hostile practices (Atharva and Angiras).<sup>22</sup> The American Iroquois distinguished *orenda*, operating in religion, and *oranda*, operating in magic. Among the Arunta and Loritja tribes in Australia, magic forces are distinguished as *arungquilha* from the mana of the tribal world which has already taken the totemic divisions and resides in the churingas of the different totems.<sup>23</sup> By this time there had been perceived the obvious division of the elements, earth, fire, air, and water.<sup>24</sup> Fire and air were put with the good, as being light, warm, and dry, and earth and water on the evil side as being dark, cold, and moist. Male and female fell also into the list of opposites. But through these opposing series, process set up a cyclic motion, down on one side and up on the other, in the Rita of India, and in the Tao of China (the revolution of the yang and the yin). This form of unity is also the logos of Heraclitus and the cycles of Gautama.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 122.

<sup>23</sup>Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, tr. J. W. Swain, p. 197f.

<sup>24</sup>Otto Gilbert, *Meteorologische Theorien d. Griech. Altertums*, chap. I, quoted in Cornford op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>25</sup>Cornford marks this as the *dike* form of unity and distinguishes another form, that of *moira* in which the allotment of elements rather than the balanced cycle was regulative. He suggests that these determined the difference between the two main tendencies in early Greek philosophy, the Ionian and the Eleatic, although borrowing each from each. But he finds, nevertheless, the unity with which each movement started, in the pre-philosophic primitive world. See the present writer's criticism of his derivation of unity in "Primitive Mental Attitude and the Objective Study of Mind," *The Monist*, July, 1933.

From the view-point at which we have arrived, a synthesis of the phenomena of the primitive world takes place of itself. The widely different theories by which these phenomena are derived from an earlier individualism alike appear as labored. Scholarship has shown an inevitable disposition to trace all human origins to atomism. Though the condition actually discovered everywhere in early life is one in which individual and particular are almost submerged under forces of widest scope, they must presuppose an earlier individualism. After *mana* was discovered, when it became evident that conation or wish or inner doing is the core of the conception, scientific scholars have been confirmed in their atomistic prejudices. There was first, it is held, a *mana* of this and a *mana* of that and later came the unifying process. But just how this is to be conceived is nowhere made clear.

It would not be difficult to explain why such a prejudice should have arisen. In the first place, it is essentially the sense-empiricist prejudice against original unity. We have attempted to show the force of this feeling of unity in primitive mind. Nor are we alone in such observation. Durkheim's faithful study could not escape it. But we will return to this in a moment. It is precisely this unity which stirs prejudice and prevents even its own recognition in most scholars. For the writers on anthropological matters have been of the positivistic temper of sense-empiricism. They have presupposed a gradual evolution from animal mind, solving problems by reflective thinking. They have usually overlooked the tension to inclusive unity in the magico-religious mental attitude of primitive man and have regarded the whole episode as a crazy aberration somehow to be explained away. On the other hand, the philosophers of "the great tradition" have not expected to find an ally, and especially not a corrective, in so backward a stage of development. They have been too confident of their own position to become alive to the evidence here of an inclusive unity in mind immediately given and offering a wholly empirical position on which to establish the most significant position in their philosophy—that of unity. They were too long content with a unity derived by way of solution of the problem of knowledge or of the problem of substance, too readily accepting and using it as a basis for ardent speculation without further urgency to probe to the "deep ground of the given." The actual research in primitive anthropology was carried



on by men given to the method of analysis and profoundly distrusting all evidence of original unities.

Even Durkheim, when his thoroughgoing studies of primitive man led to the necessary recognition of this fact of a tension to unity in primitive mental attitude, felt himself under necessity to derive this unity from a previous multiplicity. The profoundly significant part he finds it playing, nevertheless, not only for primitive, but also for all sociological phenomena, convinces him of its reality. It is a being *sui generis*; it is a unity indissoluble; it yields the forms of religion, ethics, and knowledge, and the force of all progress. The inspiration of the master's writings and the enthusiasm of his followers both have their rise in this Durkheimian social unity, which was first discovered, in following out his method of "historical criticism," in the mental attitude of primitive man. Starting out with idealistic monism as a foil, Durkheim is moved to inexhaustible enthusiasm when he discovers an empirical unity large enough to form the basis of a sociological system of thought. Nevertheless, by virtue of his positivistic heritage, he is obliged to derive it from a previous multiplicity. It arose from an effervescence in which individuals, previously held together in a horde by merely mechanical bonds of similarity, after having first been separated into lesser groups by some shock, are brewed into an organic unity.<sup>26</sup> But since he makes *mana* first appear as social continuum, logically, it should be conceived first as inclusive unity and later as individualized. Indeed the derivation of a *mana* of this and a *mana* of that under an original unity presents no difficulty. But this school also reveals an inevitable tendency to go from the particular to the general, without however clearly working the matter out.<sup>27</sup> Indeed when Durkheim derives his society *sui generis* from previous individuals as such he asks what seems to the positive empiricist an unanswerable question, "for whence could it otherwise come?"<sup>28</sup>

There is another notable place where the retarding force of

<sup>26</sup>*La division du travail.*

<sup>27</sup>Durkheim, throughout *Elem. Forms*, speaks of the totemic principle, or *mana* of the clan, as original and the inclusive *mana* of the tribe as derived although much of his evidence points in the other direction. Compare also Cornford's treatment of the matter: *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup>"Les représentations individuelles et les représentations sociales," *Revue Metaphysique* (1898), p. 295.

historic empiricism is seen in a spirit similarly sensitive to the significance for philosophy of an indissoluble unity. We refer again to the philosophy of William James. When he found a complete integration of interests guaranteed as an absolute moral standard by the presence of a sentiment *sui generis*<sup>29</sup> he assumed that that sentiment was derived through a process of judgement. He considered it merely as holding logically. That it should be the issue of a unity *given* in mind lay beyond consideration.<sup>30</sup>

We have now perhaps the means at hand to strengthen the suggestion made in the introduction of this paper that immediate or radical empiricism may turn out to be the view of common sense not in its modern sophisticated form but in its primitive truly ingenuous form. Since it was too naive for any animus, it may prove itself a touchstone to empiricism in our own time. Immediate empiricism, turning out to be identical with Buddhism in a more complete way than James apprehended, may have to awaken to its own immediate *feeling* of unity which Buddhism inherited from the primitive world.

There certainly was a time when reflective mind emerged in the planet and, however much intra- and extra-organic factors may have operated in its production,<sup>31</sup> it was a biological and not a sociological event. It is a matter of heredity whatever may come to be the ultimate conception of heredity. It would, of course, be at first completely ingenuous, reacting to its situations faithfully, according to its own inner form, without the slightest reflection on its self or its methods. Now the mental attitude of non-civilized man has perforce been studied by a thoroughly objective method, observing his magico-religious beliefs and behavior. I say "perforce" because we have only deposits from prehistoric periods; and, for our "savage" contemporaries, seldom a "philosopher" among them has power to conceive the meaning inherent in the ways of his people. This is because what gives their mental attitude a consistent meaning, a meaning which determined the initial conceptions of historic philosophy in whatever land it occurred, is an inner form, felt, or given in immediate empiricism, and not an overt rational synthesis. One might say that there should be a warning

<sup>29</sup>*Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 188.

<sup>30</sup>"Moral Inwardness" by the present writer, *The Monist*, Jan. '32.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. E. B. Holt, *Animal Drive and the Learning Process*, chap. II, III, IV. F. S. C. Northrop, *Science and First Principles*, chap. IV.

to present-day objective students of mind that unity gets its persistency in philosophy, not merely from the escapeless presence of the logical subject imputing its unity also to the objective world, but from a deeper source,—in the fact that the conception of unity initial in philosophy in every tradition is now by trust-worthy evidence traced to the primitive world view. The natural presumption would be that it is original there. In another place we have argued that the attempted derivation of it from a primary multiplicity is not successful. In this paper we have presented evidence that it is *given in feeling*—in immediate perception.

Indeed it is sufficient to demonstrate, almost, the immediate perception of unity in the mind to recall how, when the world was still young and individualism was no such rank growth as in the modern world, a whole polytheism of individual gods was, under the feeling of unity, fused into “henotheism,” and the old primitive unity of brahman, reinstated easily, became a metaphysical Absolute. Similarly in Greece the individual gods were repudiated and philosophy returned to cosmic unity—the all-water, the *apeiron*, the number unity, the one fire. The Hebrews came quickly to a conception of a social unity, the “Kingdom of God,” and of a moral cosmos.

Indeed it could be shown perhaps that, when in epic barbarism the pole of multiplicity first began to assert itself powerfully as a dominating individualism, the superior force of the feeling of unity inherited in the rising schools of thought from the primal world, so subordinated the particular and the individual, or closed them out from consideration as real, that philosophy was started upon the “high abstract path,”—an error, perhaps inescapable, but one the correction of which has engaged the human spirit throughout the history of philosophy. The acknowledgement of the two poles of mind in mutual relation, multiplicity and unity, immediately given to non-sensuous perception may be approaching. Thus will be achieved the real basis or the inclusive form for the structure of thought and of value. But this paragraph should be expanded into a very long essay.